



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Weir Farm National Historic Site
735 Nod Hill Road
Wilton, CT 06897



Weir Farm Art Center
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EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA



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Weir Farm National Historic Site
Superintendent Linda Cook

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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Dear Weir Farm Volunteers, Stakeholders, and Appreciators,

I've been working as the chief of collections management and visitor services at Weir Farm for almost four years, and I'm about to make a career change; I'll be leaving Weir Farm at the end of May.

Shortly before I started working here, my husband and I were privileged to be invited



to the 2002 Fete Champetre gala art auction. Then-superintendent Randy Turner introduced me around to many of you who were at that event. When I met Bob Faesy, a long-time supporter of Weir Farm, he told me that I was very lucky to be able to work here.

Now I can attest that Bob was right. The National Park Service has many wonderful employees, volunteers, and partners; all things being equal, Weir Farm has an even higher ratio of wonderful to regular people.

The people who work at Weir Farm make it a great place to work, but I also believe that Weir Farm itself makes the people who work here, better people. At least I think that for me! Thank you, and best of luck in keeping the Weir Farm spirit alive.

Best regards to all of you,

Maria Abonnel

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The Land of Nod



J. Alden Weir. *The Truants*, 1895. Oil on canvas.
Weir Farm Art Center. Gift of Lisa Kurts.

The Return of *The Truants*

After a long absence, *The Truants* by Julian Alden Weir has returned to the Burlingham House Visitor Center at Weir Farm NHS. The painting was removed several months ago to be fitted with a new protective cover, placed between the frame and painting, to shield it from light damage and other hazards.

The Truants will now serve as the centerpiece for a new exhibit at Weir Farm NHS that concentrates on the landscape of the farm and how it shaped and inspired the artwork that was completed here.

It is possible that no other work painted at

One cannot help but feel that wonderful something that the landscape in nature suggests, somewhat like the soul of a human being.
Julian Alden Weir

When you drive by or walk through Weir Farm NHS, this treasured local landscape inspires and draws you in every time. To resource managers, it is a cultural landscape -- a place managed to take you back in time, when farmers' fields dominated this part of Connecticut. This landscape is found in hundreds of Weir's paintings, and those of his fellow artists. The stone walls, gardens, orchards, terraced lawns, and the pond, all have points of reference in history and art. Keeping this landscape intact and alive is the master work of horticulturist Greg Waters and summer staff Scott Buchta and Nate Doran.

Thank you to all the park neighbors who patiently waited and watched as we removed trees along Nod Hill Road. We were very lucky to have a team of top notch arborists from national parks around the country here to remove many of the non-historic trees that had taken root in the last 40 years. This summer in the park, you may see some of our latest projects: kids' art classes, architects and engineers planning the rehabilitation of the historic studios, archeologists surveying, and volunteer monitors studying the water quality and bird populations. Although, Weir Farm NHS is the state's only national park, we are also part of a vast network of resources found in national parks from Maine to Virginia and across the country.

Superintendent Linda Cook

Upcoming Events

Jazz in the Garden September 24, 2006

Held outdoors on the terraced gardens of Weir Farm, this annual event welcomes the public to spread their blankets on the lawn and share in the lively jazz of the Brubeck Brothers Quartet with special guest Ken Gioffre.

Tickets: \$20 per adult and \$5 for children under 12. Please contact the Weir Farm Art Center at (203) 761-9945 for advance tickets and information. PLEASE NOTE: No parking at Weir Farm. All parking is off-site and a free shuttle will be provided.

National Public Lands Day September 30, 2006

Please join us for the nation's largest hands-on volunteer effort to improve and enhance our public lands. We encourage you to roll up your sleeves and volunteer alongside National Park Service staff. Come and devote a few hours to historic landscape restoration at Weir Farm!

This annual event gives all of us a chance to give back to the very lands we use to hike, picnic and explore. Please contact Weir Farm NHS at (203) 834-1896 for more information.

Lengthening Shadows: The Legacy of J. Alden Weir December 3, 2006

This new theatrical event is based on the diaries and letters of American Impressionist J. Alden Weir, one of Ridgefield's most famous artists. You will hear, in their own words, from friends, family, and the fellow artists who helped lay the foundation of America's modern art movement.

A benefit for the preservation of Weir Farm NHS, Connecticut's only national park and the only national park devoted to American painting.

The performance will be held at the Ridgefield Playhouse in Ridgefield, Connecticut. For information and tickets, please contact the box office by phone at (203) 438-5795.



Field Notes

Spring arrived early this year with unseasonably warm weather and excellent flowering of the weeping cherry, lilacs, crabapples, and dogwoods. The bees appeared to have nice weather for pollinating whilst the apple trees were in bloom. We're all hopeful that it will be another good fruiting year.

This summer, an exciting development in the implementation of the restoration of the cultural landscape treatment took place at the end of June. With the help of the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, we removed a number of non-historic trees, which significantly opened up historic views and painting sites. This project also included the pruning of several of the more historically significant trees and the replacement of several other historic trees which were in poor health.

Also, we have just completed the inventory of biological natural resources at Weir Farm, and we are now entering into the monitoring phase. We have chosen to monitor three resources over time to serve as indicators of overall ecosystem health. These important resources include landbird population, water quality, and forest health.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers are welcome again this year to assist with restoration activities on the grounds. We have set up regular times each week for volunteers to join Horticulturist Greg Waters and his staff as they work to maintain the landscape of Weir Farm.

Gardening Wednesdays 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Stone Wall Repair and Trail Work Thursdays 12:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

If you would like to help out, please call so that we know to expect you. Greg can be reached at (203) 544-9829 x11.

The Land of Nod: The name given to the Branchville property by J. Alden Weir and his artist friends. Both Weir and Childe Hassam used the phrase to title works that were inspired by the local landscape. Hildegard Cummings, in her essay Art and Nature in the Landscapes of Nod, affirms that Weir "and his friends delighted in the serendipitous allusion to the mythical land of pleasant dreams."

Weir Farm Art Center

This is an exciting and challenging time at the Weir Farm Art Center. Weir Farm's illustrious history and its remarkable potential seem to be converging, creating a new momentum and enthusiasm among both loyal and new supporters. Our revised mission statement refines our objectives and allows for new latitude to our programming. Our name change is a harbinger of many ambitious plans the Weir Farm Art Center Board of Trustees, Council of Overseers and Staff have endorsed. Identifying ourselves as an art-based organization lends new importance to our programming and it brings us back to J. Alden Weir's reason for being here - to create art in nature.

The Weir Farm Art Center is seeking new ways to share the park's collection of art by Weir and his contemporaries. At the same time, we are focusing on the Artist in Residence program as a tangible manifestation of Weir's experience. The dual purposes of art history and contemporary art situated at a national park that is so lovingly supported by our local constituency create a wealth of new opportunities. Weir's long and prolific career has yet to be fully examined, and the work of his artist friends who visited Weir Farm provides myriad tangents into the history of art and this exceptional setting. Our public programs, including the Art Explorer summer art classes for children, our lectures, exhibitions and publications contribute to our new, broader identity. Accordingly, we have initiated new alliances with local, regional and national art organizations, funding institutions and patrons throughout the United States.

In 2007, we will celebrate the 125th anniversary of Weir Farm with an array of programs and events that reflect our enthusiasm for the Weir Farm's past and future. In conjunction with those festivities, we will announce a new membership campaign with new benefits for each member category. Upper level donors will be afforded special educational and social opportunities. All Weir Farm Art Center members should anticipate the announcement of established and new programs for adults, children and families in the coming months.

This collaborative newsletter is a clear indication that our aspirations for the Weir Farm Art Center are made in tandem with the goals of the Weir Farm National Historic Site. The Park staff has embraced the changes we have set in motion with uncommon generosity and good humor, for which we are very grateful.

Executive Director Daphne A. Deeds
Weir Farm Art Center



Upcoming Exhibits

ON SIGHT: Frances B. Ashforth
July 19, 2006 to September 17, 2006
Images of Nature: Landscape and Stone

ON SIGHT: 2006 Visiting Artists
October 4, 2006 to January 7, 2007
Featuring works by:
Jeanne Englert
Stephen Grossman
Margaret Murphy
Mathew Weber
Andrea Wollensak
Reception: October 26, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Kids Art Classes at Weir Farm

Don't wait to enroll your budding young artist in one of Weir Farm Art Center's unique art courses. Summer classes for children at Weir Farm National Historic Site in Wilton, CT are filling up fast.

Art Explorer programs encourage young artists, ages 6-12, to explore their own creativity and the environment through the discovery of the Weir Farm landscape with outstanding instruction. Enroll in a two day or three day workshop, or try a week-long class, each in two or three hour sessions.

Come participate in Explorer's Sketchbook, August 14-18 from 10:00 to 12:00, to learn how to identify the trees, plants, insects and birds of Connecticut. Sketching and painting techniques will be practiced. Document a week at Weir Farm like a scientist!

Classes are offered in age specific groups and are held rain or shine from July 5, 2006 to August 18, 2006. Registration is by mail or in person. No registration by phone. Forms are available at the Weir Farm Visitor Center at 735 Nod Hill Road, Wilton, CT, on the web at www.nps.gov/wefa (click For Kids), or by calling (203) 761-9945.

Kate Lindenburg, age 7. *Trees in the Grass*, 2005. Crayon on paper.